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25 November 1975

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MEMORANDUM FOR: AC/CPAD
AC/MPRRD

SUBJECT: Community Telemetry Processing Planning

1. In November 1973, I wrote the attached memorandum (Tab A). It cited predicted rising costs associated with Community telemetry processing, the fact that no centralized processing plan existed, and the need for the IC Staff to address these issues as well as to set forth recommendations as to how the Community should proceed. A study was performed. Some general recommendations were made; however, upon publication IC Staff concern, action, and/or participation in Community telemetry processing planning apparently ceased. It can only be conjectured as to why benign neglect has taken place; however, the fact that it did occur should raise the question as to whether or not it is profitable in terms of IC Staff future efforts to perform studies, particularly if follow-up awareness or implementation aspects are not pursued.

2. Tab B contains a recent audit of the production of telemetry intelligence performed by the Directorate for Defense Agency Audits. It contains a number of observations, conclusions, and recommendations. In particular, it illuminates cost aspects. It is my understanding that, in conjunction with ASD(I), NSA is currently preparing a DoD telemetry processing plan. An effort will be made to plan for centralized procurement among the several Government organizations. I have been advised that an ad hoc group has been formed within DoD to address the various aspects.

3. The question arises as to whether or not the IC Staff should again become involved and, if so, to what degree. "Processing" is certainly within our charter. Hence, one could postulate that IC Staff participation could range from that of simply monitoring what's going on to one of participation in the current DoD planning.

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Budget levels may well change, as well as flow of telemetry intelligence. At a very minimum we might wish to clarify why CIA representation has not been solicited by NSA. As of 19 November, I was advised this had not been done. All will agree, I am sure, that the planned upgrade of Mission Ground Station processing equipments relate to subsequent processing within CONUS.

4. From both a Community planning and IC Staff planning point of view, I suggest an early meeting among CPAD, MPRRD, and PD/Plans to decide what should or should not be done.

Office of the PD/Plans

Attachments:

As Stated

Distribution:

Cy. 1 - AC/CPAD (w/atts)

Cy. 2 - AC/MPRRD (w/atts)

✓ Cy. 3 - IC Registry (w/att 1 only)

Cy. 4 - PD Chrono (w/atts)

PD/Plans

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1 November 1973

Ser B, Cy. 3

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT : Telemetry Processing Equipment Costs
and Related Plans

1. One year ago, telemetry processing equipment costs within the intelligence budget were projected at approximately \$60M for the five year period 1974-1978. Current budget figures for the 1975-1979 time frame indicate that costs will be closer to \$120M. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this marked increase is that it is almost totally independent of the projected collection posture for these years. In other words, whether or not one [] is approved, [] is modified, [] or contract operation of [] occurs, the costs of telemetry processing equipment are projected to double.

2. There are a number of reasons why this anomaly has not surfaced or been viewed in the terms expressed above. The primary reason is that the budget review process in this case concentrated solely on the budget year under consideration. The impact of out-year costs was not a factor in current budget planning among the various programs. A secondary reason is the fact that costs associated with telemetry processing are justified separately among the various programs throughout the budget review process, and telemetry as a category is not identified across these programs. It is agreed that [] the proposed NSA processing system, has had considerable attention focused upon it by ASD(I) staff, but while the intelligence budget has been searched, massaged, and, to some extent, manipulated in an effort to reduce costs, the category across programs is rising significantly, yet unnoticed. There is no strong justification for this increase,

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nor is there a cross-program collection and related processing plan in being.

3. I note from discussions with [redacted]

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[redacted] that one of the projected tasks for the PEG is review of ELINT/Telemetry processing. The initiative for this study stems from common community concern about data flow. To some extent it was triggered by the [redacted] report. While this may be a worthwhile project, it is not clear what impact the study will have on telemetry processing costs and related plans, if it is not performed in synchronization with the budget cycle as are studies performed specifically for EXCOM decisions.

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4. The 1974 budget cycle begins in early 1974 with the issuance of general program guidance. It uses as its base the FY 75 program which, in the case of telemetry processing equipment costs, contains significant R&D starts. To some degree, equipment costs are incrementally funded from FY 74 and reflect procurement of long-lead items and the like. The normal reaction is to continue funding of this previously approved program. Zero-base review is not a common practice. The opportunity to hold telemetry processing costs at a reasonable level, therefore, has passed. Unless the telemetry study is taken on and costs identified and reviewed as a matter of urgency, the significance of its impact will be negligible. I recommend that it be completed prior to FY 75 apportionment and FY 76 POM submission.

5. The study should identify processing requirements in the FY 75-FY 79 time frame and review the various systems equipments projected to satisfy these requirements. It should address missions and roles and determine the impact that new processing systems will have on consumer analytic methods. An examination of the processing mix should be undertaken, i.e., should processing be fully centralized, fully decentralized, or a combination of both. The study should, of course, recommend appropriate costs levels for future years.

6. An underlying theme to all of the above should be "do we need to bulk process all telemetry in a declining budget era, and if not, what telemetry must be processed." I am firmly convinced that the processing strategy and related processing

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systems design supporting this strategy are short sighted and non-innovative in their approach.

7. It would be meaningful if, at the forthcoming IRAC session, the DCI would briefly note the rising costs of telemetry processing and state that the terms of reference for a community study of this problem are being prepared. It is for this reason that I am addressing this memorandum to you at this time. Should you deem it inappropriate to do this because of the already loaded agenda for IRAC, then the terms of reference referred to above can be the subject of separate IC correspondence at an early date. As noted in previous paragraphs, there is some urgency to getting on with this task and I will work with [] under [] to do this. I recommend it take priority over any proposed ELINT studies.

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